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ABSTRACT

This two-part guide recognizes the importance of pupil services to the educational process and presents the pupil services team approach as an effective means of providing comprehensive services to pupils. Part I emphasizes the need for a clear understanding of the team concept and discusses basic rules of a team operation. Various purposes for pupil services teams are suggested, and the structure and operation of the team is considered. Scheduling of the pupil services team activities is discussed and a sample team schedule is included in the appendix. A section on administrative planning reviews the roles of a team director and team coordinators. A review of the pupil service professions examines the areas of special education, guidance services, social work, psychological services, school health services, and speech and language services. Part II of the guide focuses on recordkeeping and the pupil services team. Objectives of a central file system are enumerated and the mechanics of operation are discussed. Sample consent forms and committee report forms are included in the appendices. (NRB)

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PUPIL SERVICES - The Team Approach

Part I. The Team

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The purpose of this writing is to present the concept of the Pupil Services Team in Education as an effort to provide for the needs of the total child and to make the educational experience for each pupil relevant to his or her individual needs. With the advent of new legislation mandating that this be done for pupils suspected of being handicapped and the growing recognition that this should be the goal for all children, Pupil Services become increasingly vital to the educational process.

Pupil Services are generally defined as those services of a non-instructional nature that are required in order to enable the pupil to achieve the maximum benefit from the educational experience. There are many services such as transportation, food and plant maintenance that fall into this definition but will not be a part of this discussion.

Those direct services that most frequently are included in the Pupil Service Team concept and in Pupil Service Administrative organization are Special Education, Guidance, Psychological, Social Work, Medical, and Speech/Language Services. Increasingly, there are additional areas of service entering into the educational system and, with the growing recognition of the need for mutual collaboration between all helping professions, the education efforts must increasingly include other human service providers.

The organization of a delivery system for Pupil Services presents numerous problems. There is an endless variety of organizational structures presently in operation, and it is doubtful that any two are the same. It would appear that most Pupil Service programs have evolved as a result of local pressures, expertise (or lack thereof!), interests, or other miscellaneous factors rather than in a planned or comprehensive effort.

One reason for this may be that many Pupil Services personnel are now coming into education without any real appreciation or understanding of the educational philosophy or administrative structure. Conversely, education

frequently does not know how to relate to or collaborate with other disciplines. One of the greatest problems in education may well be the fact that the schools are increasingly required to provide services and programs in areas where they do not have the required skills or expertise. The combining of these factors, pupil service personnel unsophisticated in education, and educators facing problems that are out of their area of competency, creates an atmosphere of anxiety, mistrust, and frustration. Frequently, because of this, much time and energy is wasted in resolving problems of turfism, professional jealousy, and petty procedural differences. The end result is that the child becomes the pawn used to fight the battles of the professions and receives little or no services. Fortunately, most children seem to survive in spite of this. It is obvious that the continued confusion and mistrust among those professions committed to meeting the needs of children can only lead to continued inadequate services.

Whether or not the schools should provide many types of service is questionable. Certainly the schools are carrying many responsibilities that ideally should be borne by other resources. Should the schools provide free meals, sex education, physical therapy, family counselling, etc., etc.? These questions may be debated endlessly but the hard reality is that the schools are providing these services and more, primarily because no one else is doing it and the children are in the schools bringing problems demanding solutions with them. Increasingly, the schools are forced to develop service programs to meet the human needs in addition to the educational needsof the child. A hungry, emotionally upset, or victimized child cannot fully benefit from the best educational program until these matters are relieved. Therefore, the question of whether or not the schools should provide services other than educational is not the real issue. Rather, the

question that must be answered is how can we meet the needs of the child and thereby prepare him or her to develop his or her maximum potential. Obviously, the present efforts are inadequate and the time has come for the "experts" in human services to "get their act together."

The object of all human service systems or agencies is, or should be, to provide quality services through competent and ethical practitioners. The educational system must carry the responsibility for the quality of services provided to pupils. This is mandated in most places either by legislative action or board directive at the state level. This is as it should be but raises some serious questions for the various human service providers.

The primary question that seems to emerge is whether one discipline or profession, education, can or should determine criteria for competencies and service quality for other disciplines or professions. In other words, should educators determine the standards and expertise required for the psychologist, social worker, nurse, or other professional service provider? Obviously, the development of appropriate criteria is basic to providing qualitative services and must be done, but to have one discipline or profession set standards and evaluate another creates an impossible situation and often results in a nonproductive service delivery system.

The various professions cannot fully comprehend the competencies and skills required of each other. Education does not fully comprehend the skills and expertise of the social worker, and the social worker does not fully comprehend the skills and expertise required of the educator. The same is true of other pupil service disciplines, and it is only through mutual respect and collaboration that this can be overcome and qualitative services provided to all children.

There are a variety of ways that have been proposed to assure the competency of those service providers in educational systems. Teacher

competency has received the most scrutiny and a universal method of teacher evaluation has yet to emerge. Evaluation based on programs and training has been used in some instances while others require certain degrees or specific courses to assure competency in a particular field.

Another means of evaluating competency is to review the actual job performance and develop competency tests to measure the skills desired. This, along with observation by professional colleagues, is also a means of determining performance levels. The nature of providing human services is such that a quantitative evaluation does not provide the type of quality control desired. There is no guarantee that a person obtaining a particular degree or participating in any given training program will become a skilled service provider. Nor will every provider of service demonstrate skills consistently satisfactory to colleagues or subject to quantative analysis.

It just may be that the most reliable evaluative procedure will emerge as one where the consumer, the pupil in the schools, will be asked to provide some evaluative input based on the adequacy of a program to meet his or her needs. Business has long ago learned that the consumer is the final determinant of the success of a product. Human service providers may also face this reality.

In light of the lack of understanding of one profession of the other and the necessity for providing qualitative services to children, it is imperative that collaborative efforts be initiated to develop comprehensive services delivery systems. Each deliverer of services is held accountable by the purchaser of these services. In the case of the pupil service worker in an educational setting, the school system holds the worker accountable for services purchased. It is therefore incumbent on each profession to assure the competency of its practitioners as much as possible. This presents a

direct challenge to each pupil service profession to develop standards of service in clear and concise ways that will be mutually acceptable to those other service providers working towards the same end--the welfare of the child.

It is interesting to note that education and other human service professions have very similar stated goals and objectives. However, there is very little overlap or duplication in the services provided by each. There are only a small number of the total human service providers who work in schools, and a very small part of the educational system's resources are allocated for human services. It would appear that the future courtship and possible marriage of these professions is inevitable in view of the increasing demands to provide services to the total child. Economics and legislative mandates may force this marriage sooner than expected! In this age of increasing accountability and economic pressures, duplicate or competitive services at the taxpayers expense must be minimized or eliminated.

Never before has there been such an opportunity to develop comprehensive services to all children. The public schools, as the largest child-servicing agency in this society, could provide the vehicle for this. There is no place for turfism, professional jealousy, and competitiveness as now exists among those groups and agencies who describe themselves as concerned with child welfare. The fact that PL 94-142 mandates the multi-disciplinary approach to the diagnosis and treatment of children suspected of being handicapped provides a strong basis for the team approach, and experience indicates that this approach is the most effective for meeting the needs of all children.

The Team Approach in Pupil Services

The Pupil Services Team represents the most effective means of providing comprehensive services to pupils and calls for a clear understanding of the

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team concept. There are several basic rules of a team operation that must be recognized if the end product of the team effort is to be qualitative services to pupils.

The members of the Pupil Services Team must each be competent in their respective fields and have the professionalism and expertise to function effectively and efficiently within their specific area of responsibility without intruding into other areas that may be interesting but out of their field. Each Pupil Services staff member, as a member of the team, represents an area of service and must mesh with the other services in order to achieve a comprehensive program.

Each Pupil Service Team member must also respect and have confidence in the representatives of various disciplines. The social worker must understand and appreciate the expertise of the educator, psychologist, nurse, etc., while others must reciprocate this respect and professional confidence. No single profession is able to provide total services for any pupil, and collaboration is the only way to achieve this. Inherent in the ability to function as a team member is the ability to view the contribution of one's own expertise to the whole process of developing appropriate programs and plans for pupils without being threatened by questions or disagreements in the process of arriving at a consensus.

The Team becomes most effective when team members are able to examine their differences in terms of the needs of the pupil. If team members disagree on the findings of a given situation, examination must be made as to what is causing the difference. If, for example, the psychologist views the child as functioning below average and possibly retarded and the social worker reports that the child is viewed in the community by the parents and others as being a leader, unusually capable, and advanced for his or her age, further consideration must be given as to the cause for these differing

views of the same child. There are many variables in evaluating a person's abilities and resources.

The interesting factor here is that each team member is looking at the same situation or pupil and seeing different things. It is not unlike the group of blind children asked to describe an elephant that they were allowed to feel. They all reported differing characteristics and were all right, but they had to come together and pool their findings in order to comprehend the total animal. The same is true in the Pupil Services team. Each member sees a different part of the animal and must understand and relate to the views of the other team members. This may mean further evaluation in areas where a lack of definition emerges, or it may mean that misleading information has been provided. Whatever the reason for the differences, they are healthy and contribute to the overall team accomplishments. The basic fact is that the pupil is the same person and differences among team members stem from their perspective and sources of information.

The differences among team members do not necessarily reflect any incompetency or lack of professionalism on the part of anyone. They usually indicate that all perspectives must be considered and, where differences are of major impact, further exploration and evaluation must be done in order to determine the reasons for disagreement. A frequent cause of these differences is the lack of understanding on the part of one team member of the perspective of the other member. Also, children vary greatly from one setting to another. The psychologist usually sees the child in a test situation or in the classroom setting, while the social worker brings a view from the child's home "turf" where he is viewed by family, friends, and neighbors and often is much more relaxed and responding to a totally different set of stimuli. Rare is the child who is the same at home and at school. The need to pool the varying view of the child is crucial, and the

end result of this is more likely to be accurate than any single observation or evaluation. It is for this reason that a handicapped child cannot be classified as handicapped on the basis of any single evaluative process but must be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary committee.

The Pupil Service team should be organized in such a way as to enhance participation by all members, and each member should feel comfortable in this structure. While a coordinator of the team is necessary, there should be no hierarchy. In other words, no one discipline takes precedence over another but each has equal recognition and responsibility in the decision-making process. It is only through this mutual respect and trust with no individual person or profession having a need to dominate or control another that the team effort is effective. Through the pooling of resources and skills, a composite service plan may be developed incorporating the most positive factors from all sources.

If, however, time and energy is spent in attempting to control or dominate each other in order to prove a point or demonstrate the superiority in any given area, the primary purpose of the team is lost and the pupil suffers. The primary focus of every team member must be "How can I contribute to solving the problem?" Other self-serving activities and emphasis detracts from the team process.

The need to dominate may be the single most destructive force in the team effort. Each profession is greatly impressed with its own importance, and members of each profession frequently believe that it is only through their efforts that any qualitative services can be provided. With maturity and experience comes the realization that no one has all of the answers and others may even have some skills and expertise to deal with situations heretofore felt to be the sole responsibility of one enlightened group. With this realization, the team effort takes on a new meaning, and support,

collaboration, guidance, and assistance from colleagues is welcomed and sought diligently.

Experience has shown that a Pupil Service team usually must work together as a group for some time in order to become something more than several individuals sitting down together discussing problems of mutual concern. As these individuals grow to trust and respect each other as skilled professionals, there emerges a unity of purpose and a supportive pooling of expertise that results in observeable improvement of services and efficiency of operation. Not only does the pupil benefit from this, but each member of the team benefits through the recognition and support of colleagues and the satisfaction of being a part of a process that no one person could accomplish. The satisfying experience of working as a member of a good Pupil Service team is not unlike other group experiences where the participants are highly skilled and contribute to the total good of the whole. Musical groups, team sports, and other analogies are appropriate. The feeling that "we did it" is very exhilerating.

The Pupil Services team must be organized and operated in such a way as to obtain maximum results from the time and efforts invested. When operated appropriately and effectively, the team approach will save countless hours of staff time and will expedite the provision of services to pupils by bringing to bear all of the various resources at the same time rather than in some consecutive "buck passing" process that is most often used. The "buck passing" process is the practice of passing a problem or concern from one person or professional to another until someone becomes exhausted and takes action, often without regard to the impact on the pupil involved. Most frequently this process starts with the classroom teacher sending the pupil to the principal's office or the guidance counselor who passes the pupil on to another person who passes the problem on to another person or building who refers it to another department, division, or agency and so on until the pupil drops out or caves in from exhaustion and frustration. The

team approach brings all of these resources together early in the process and provides a means for concurrent and coordinate services.

Structure and Operation of the Pupil Services Team

Basic to the smooth operation of the Pupil Services team is the organizational structure and procedures that govern its operation. These should be clearly established and familiar to all persons serving on the team as well as to others who may work with or be exposed to the activities of this body. There are several items that must be considered in the organization of a team, and they include scheduling of meetings, assignment of personnel, agenda preparation, record keeping, and follow-up procedures. Initially, the purpose of the Pupil Services team must be defined and communicated to all concerned personnel, and members of the team must understand this in order to accomplish the goal of quality services. A review of these items will emphasize their importance.

Statement of Purpose

The Pupil Services team, in general, has the purpose of providing qualitative services to pupils. From this general statement there are many directions that may be taken in establishing a Pupil Services program. A Pupil Services team may have as its purpose any of the following or it may undertake to provide for all of these and others that may be appropriate. The order of review in no way implies any ranking or priority. The priorities must be established by the system setting up the program.

1. To provide evaluative consultation and diagnostic findings for pupils suspected of having handicapping conditions necessitating special education and related services. The Pupil Services team model is the most effective way of complying with the mandate of PL 94-142 that "the evaluation is made by a multidisciplinary team or group of persons...."[1] With each team

member bringing their evaluative data to the team and, as a group, arriving at a diagnostic statement and making appropriate recommendations for treatment, the end result will be the most comprehensive plan possible for that pupil. This is certainly the intent of the law and its effectiveness has been demonstrated wherever it has been practiced.

2. To aid in program development. The Pupil Services team provides a vehicle to jointly develop programs that will provide for pupils in terms of a much wider range of services and experiences. This holds true for the team in the individual school, at the central administrative level, and even at the state level. This concept is now being recognized at the national level with the National Alliance of Pupil Service Organizations working closely with the U.S. Office of Education. It is interesting to note that the same process of developing mutual trust and confidence takes place with organizational coalitions as occurs in the formative stages of the team in the local school. There is much anxiety, caution, and reluctance to take any risk on the part of each member. As the members get to know each other, these things dissipate and the team phenomenon emerges.

Also in the area of program development, the Pupil Services team may have as its purpose the development and provision of inservice training programs for various staff groups within the school to improve understanding and skill levels in a variety of areas. Human relations programs are a natural area for this team as are the enhancement of cultural understanding between the various elements in the community. The sharing of skills and techniques for dealing with pupil behavior provides the basis for many inservice training programs to be developed by the Pupil Services team.

3. The development of individualized programs for particular students who may need special attention or are not able to cope with the traditional classroom setting. The Pupil Services team, by being involved

early and as a team rather than in a piecemeal way, is able to monitor progress, minimize confusion among those persons providing direct service to the pupil and family, and effectively coordinate these efforts towards the common goal of enabling the pupil to function more positively.

These three areas of activity are the most frequently stated purposes of the Pupil Services team. There are many additional ways that this team approach may be used, and the only limitation is the creativity of the team itself. Pupil Service teams must be imaginative in developing ways and means of improving services and developing new and innovative programs or activities to meet the diverse needs of the pupil.

Scheduling of the Pupil Services team.

The scheduling of the team activities will depend on a variety of factors. Whether the team works solely in one school, has members serving a number of schools, works out of the central office, or has adequate professional representation from the various pupil service disciplines, will directly affect the scheduling of team activities. Whatever the situation, there are some basic considerations that are standard and should be established for any team.

1. A regular meeting time and place must be established and followed. The meetings may be scheduled weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly. Where team members serve several buildings with each school building having a team in operation, the worker's schedule must be considered. It is not unusual for a social worker or psychologist to work in three or four buildings and have a Pupil Service team scheduled in each. With one meeting per month per school, this person would have a minimum of one meeting a week to prepare for. With each meeting lasting several hours, this is a very demanding load. It should be noted that the less frequently the team meets, the longer the meetings tend to be.

The establishment of a regular meeting time and place also provides for planning by team members and enables other persons, such as the various community agency personnel, to participate in meetings.

With the time and place of the meeting scheduled regularly, the involvement of additional resources is easier. An excellent practice being carried on in some school districts is to publish a schedule of these meetings with a listing of the team members for each school to all community agencies working closely with the schools. This is particularly helpful with juvenile court and welfare staff members who frequently have reason to meet with the Pupil Services team regarding their clients. This practice enables these agency staff members to have a means of participating in the planning for the pupil and provides the schools with additional resources for services. The pupil is, after all, a member of the total community and not the sole property of the public schools.

With the scheduling of the team meetings as discussed here, there is the problem of handling situations that may arise and cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting. Procedures must be agreed upon for dealing with these situations and they should be developed by the team and be familiar to all members. Some possibilities that have proven effective include the creation of a "mini-team" in each school composed of those persons assigned only to that building and thereby available daily. This "mini-team" is able to deal with the immediate situation as appropriate and then review the matter with the regular team at the next scheduled meeting for informational purposes and additional consideration.

Another approach is to have a secondary meeting time set aside to be used only for crisis or emergency situations. If a team meets monthly, an interim time may be set aside by the team members with the understanding that a meeting will be called only for certain crisis situations. This procedure

has some inherent weaknesses in that it tends to become a regular meeting time and its purpose is thereby defeated or it is rarely used and, when an occasion arises necessitating the calling of such a meeting, team members have conflicts and are not available. Obviously, the ideal solution is to have adequate numbers of staff to schedule meetings frequently enough that this situation does not arise. Where it is possible to assign a full Pupil Services team staff to each school building without their having to serve an unrealistic number of pupils, the interim meeting poses no problem.

In summary, the scheduling of the Pupil Services team activities should be set up on a regular basis frequently enough to accomplish the purpose and publicized to all persons having a reason to work with this group. Parents of pupils being served are vital members of the team and also need this information. A sample team schedule is included in Appendix I.

Administrative Planning - The Team

In developing policies and procedures to provide special education and related services, there must be collaboration between the service providers. The team approach in providing service to pupils through the diverse staffing and procedures that recognize the need for all professional team members to work together should also be practiced at the administrative level. No longer can any area of support service work alone and initiate independent procedures for delivery of service to pupils.

Over the years there has been confusion around instructional and non-instructional services, and this has led to competitiveness, mistrust, and a general impeding of service delivery. With the goal of every person to provide services to pupils, this divisiveness is intolerable.

The most effective structure for the administration of special education and related services is one where each area of service is represented in the planning and implementation of policies and procedures involved. No one specialist can be knowledgeable in all areas to the point where the necessary

guidelines and requirements will be adequately and consistently met. Such a structure as is being proposed here would consist of a group made up of a representative of each service area. This group, as a body, would have the responsibility of developing procedures, policies, and practices necessary for the comprehensive delivery of special education and related services.

Membership in this group should include a person who is responsible for and is knowledgeable about special education programs, resources, requirements, etc., and the heads of the various related service programs. This would include the chief psychologist, social worker, nurse or medical director, speech pathologist, and other department heads as appropriate. This group should meet regularly to review operational problems and to develop programs and procedures that will most effectively and efficiently guarantee the delivery of services throughout the school system. It should be noted here that related services are usually thought of in relation to students in special education programs. This should not be a limiting factor as related services should be available to all students throughout their educational experience whether in Special Education or not.

This committee must have the same philosophical guidelines as the teams working directly with pupils in the delivery of services. That is to say that no one discipline or area of service has the expertise or knowledge to dictate the necessary requirements for the comprehensive delivery of services. This pooling of knowledge and expertise will result in a more realistic and qualitative delivery system than any one person or group could devise.

The organizational structure of this team approach will vary depending on the system in which it is located. However, the principle of team work

and communications found in the following suggested structure is crucial and is designed to provide an effective method of facilitating the provision of services. A particularly vexing problem in organizing a program within a school district is the choice of titles for various positions. It seems that many programs bog down because of attitudes towards job titles. In this discussion, the titles used are simply chosen as being descriptive and may be changed to suit the needs of any system or program. For example, whether the top administrator of the program is called a director, supervisor, chief, or coordinator, does not really matter as long as it is understood what the responsibilities for that position are. With that in mind, the following organizational structure is suggested.

Director. This position has the responsibility for coordinating the various Pupil Services. Included in this coordination is the facilitating of the team approach through regularly established procedures for meeting, planning, and evaluating practices and policies for service delivery.

Additionally, the director serves as spokesperson for Pupil Services within the administrative structure of the school system and in the community and must maintain close contact with the various coordinators of services and also with the administrative officers of the system. Communication between these two areas must be facilitated as this linkage is crucial. The administration must be fully informed of the needs, accomplishments, shortcomings, and goals of the total program. The staff of the program must have regular feedback from the administration regarding future plans, budget restrictions, policies, and any administrative activity that impacts on their efforts as service providers.

This two-way communications responsibility of the director's position cannot be overemphasized, as the breakdown in communication is probably the single most destructive factor in any program. The director carries the primary responsibility for keeping communication lines open and for initiating action to establish clear communications procedures.

Additionally, the director must serve as the coordinator of this administrative team and provide the leadership and logistical coordination necessary for its operation. The facilitating of decisions affecting the total program and, at times, the responsibility for making somewhat arbitrary decisions is a major role of this position.

The director must also recognize the technical expertise of the various departmental leaders in their respective disciplines and utilize their skills effectively as a part of the team process. Most Directors of Pupil Services have a background in one of the professions represented in the pupil service area, and this frequently creates biases, subjective planning, and a lack of the objectivity necessary for effective leadership. The director cannot become involved in subjective or preferential treatment in planning and must maintain a broad perspective of the total Pupil Service program.

This factor will create problems for the director as he or she attempts to separate the loyalty to the primary profession from the demands of the total program made up of several professions, each with their needs, ethics, and technical expertise.

Coordinators. The coordinators of the various services are seen as the person responsible for the quality of services provided within their respective areas of expertise. The title for these positions vary from coordinator to chief, supervisor, or some other designation indicative of the leadership role. This position has the responsibility for coordinating the activities of the staff of service providers in their specific discipline. This includes staff deployment, case handling procedures, accounting, and all activities related to providing qualitative services in concert with colleagues from the other service disciplines.

The coordinator of each service is a member of the administrative team and thereby has a voice in the development of procedures and practices

that will result in comprehensive coordination of the various programs. This team must meet on a regular basis and deal with the logistical problems inherent in operating a service delivery system. It is at this team level where problems related to record keeping, referral procedures, coordination plans, and related issues are resolved by mutual input and agreement from all departments. This mutual planning is mandatory if each area of service is to understand the problems faced by colleagues in allied disciplines and must set the stage for similar team activities at the case management level.

The primary focus of this administrative team must be the development of a comprehensive service delivery system where the recipient of service receives the most qualitative and efficient services possible. There are some basic guidelines that must be followed here. There must be acceptance of the fact that each service area has a contribution to make, and it is only through mutual respect and confidence that the desired level of performance can be attained. The tendency of each department or area of service to feel that their contribution is the crucial one must be recognized and controlled. In the development of procedures for service delivery, there may be the need to standardize some practices for efficiency. Effective compromises must be made in these deliberations and frequently this collaborative planning results in more creative and efficient activities and procedures than would otherwise be possible.

The position of coordiantor, while primarily responsible for the services within their particular area of expertise, must also be able to view the total Pupil Service Program in perspective and relate their area to the whole rather than allowing it to operate in isolation or to fragment the program. This requires constant and regular communications both laterally and vertically. Lateral communication involves communicating with other

coordinators who face similar concerns and responsibility in their respective areas of service. Vertical communication demands that the coordinator have open communication with those staff members directly responsible to the position and also with those positions to whom the coordinator reports. This liaison responsibility between the levels of the bureaucracy is crucial in developing an effective system and without it, the program suffers.

PUPIL SERVICE AREAS

A major question that is debated throughout educational circles is the question of what areas constitute pupil services. This varies from state to state and from district to district within the same state. Often the structure is designed so that those "non-instructional" support services are considered as Pupil Services and organized as a separate department or structure within the school district. With the variations of definitions and job descriptions for the various Pupil Service disciplines, it is necessary to arrive at some standard definition for general discussion. Therefore a brief review of Pupil Service professions is presented here.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education is obviously an instructional program and yet it also is frequently included in Pupil Services because of the specialized nature of the special educational programs and the necessity of close collaboration with the support or related services provided by the Pupil Service staff. Whatever administrative structure is established, the special education staff must function as a part of the total Pupil Service team.

While much has been written about special education, the definition presented in Public Law 94-142 is the most universal working definition in education today. It reads as follows:

"§ 121a.14 Special Education

(a) (1) As used in this part, the term "special education" means specifically designed instruction at no cost to the parent to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child, including classroom instruction, instruction in physical education, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions.

(2) The term includes speech pathology, or any other related service, if the service consists of specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child, and is considered "special education" rather than a "related service" under State standards.

(3) The term also includes vocational education if it consists of specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child.

(b) The terms in this definition are defined as follows:

(1) "At no cost" means that all specially designed instruction is provided without charge, but does not preclude incindental fees which are normally charged to non-handicapped students or their parents as a part of the regular education program.

(2) "Physical education" is defined as follows:

(I) The term means the development of:

(A) Physical and motor fitness;

(B) Fundamental motor skills and patterns; and

(C) Skills in aquatics, dance, and individual and group games and sports (including intramural and lifetime sports).

(II) The term includes special physical education, adapted physical education, movement education, and motor development.

(20 U.S.C. 1401(16))

(3) "Vocational education" means organized educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation for a career requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree.

(20 U.S.C. 1401(16))

Comment: (1) The definition of "special education" is a particularly important one under these regulations, since a child is not handicapped unless he or she needs special education. (See the definition of "handicapped children" in section 121a.5.) The definition of "related services" (section 121a.13) also depends on this definition, since a related service must be necessary for a child to benefit from special education. Therefore, if a child does not need special education, there can be no "related services" and the child (because not "handicapped") is not covered under the Act.

(2) The above definition of vocational education is taken from the Vocational Education Act of 1963, as amended by Pub. Law 94-482. Under that Act, "vocational education" includes industrial arts and consumer and homemaking education programs."[2]

This definition clearly connects special education with related services, and other sections of this law define these services. It should be noted that the definitions of the related services as presented in PL 94-142 were provided to the Office of Education by the various professional organizations recognized in these fields of practice. For purposes of this law, related services are provided only to handicapped pupils. However, there is growing recognition that these same resources are necessary for all pupils in order to provide preventive and interventive services. Moreover, there is an increasing demand for the services to all pupils by parents, special interest groups, and even the pupils themselves.

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Each pupil service profession has published standards, role descriptions, training requirements, and excellent information in great detail regarding the practice of that specific discipline. The reader is referred to Appendix II for a listing of various sources for additional information regarding any specific area of practice. For purposes of this discussion, a brief review of the various Pupil Service team members is presented indicating their role on the team.

GUIDANCE SERVICES

The Guidance Counselor frequently assumes the role of team coordinator because the counselor is most often based in an individual school, while other Pupil Service staff are often assigned to two or more buildings and thereby serve on a number of team simultaneously. The guidance counselor is frequently the first Pupil Service staff member to have contact with the pupil and also is in a position to provide ongoing contact and services.

There are dangers in the counselor's serving as team coordinator. Coordination should be kept in the context of arranging agendas, communicating with team members, and monitering activities for the team in that school. All team members must be kept informed of activities regarding matters in which the team is involved, and the guidance counselor is usually in the best position to provide this.

As a member of the Pupil Services Team, the guidance counselor provides the perspective of the pupil's adjustment within the school program and, along with the teacher, represents that facet of the child's adjustment as seen by those persons in daily contact with the pupil in school. This is a key role in the team, as the primary responsibility of this group is the pupil's educational adjustment and experience. Guidance counselors, by virtue of their training and professional expertise, are able to provide a major contribution to the team's effort to develop an educational plan for each pupil. Additionally, the guidance counselor is frequently in the

best position to follow through on committee recommendations or to moniter progress of the pupil in adaptive or modified programs. Excellent information regarding the role and training of the guidance counselor may be obtained from the sources listed in Appendix II.

SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Social Work Services in the schools is defined in Public Law 94-142 as including:

"(i) Preparing a social or developmental history on a handicapped child;

(ii) Group and individual counselling with the child and family;

(iii) Working with those problems in a child's living situation (Home, school, and community) that affect the child's adjustment in school; and

(iv) Mobilizing school and community resources to enable the child to receive maximum benefit from his or her educational program."[3]

The social worker in the schools shares many skills and areas of expertise with other Pupil Service Team members. The responsibilities listed in the above definition are not all unique to social work, and the social worker must be aware of this fact. However, the social worker as a member of the Pupil Services Team has a unique contribution to make, and that is to present the perspective of the pupil in terms of his family and living situation and how factors there impact on the adjustment, or lack thereof, in the educational setting. The social worker by virtue of training in family dynamics, community and social behavior, represents a vital perspective of the pupil and is frequently able to interpret behavior in terms of these factors and thereby greatly facilitate the development of a meaningful educational plan for the pupil. School social work, while relatively new to Pupil Services in many areas of the country, is rapidly becoming recognized

as a vital service component. Frequently the social worker has the role of advocate for the family or pupil and must represent their interests in areas of confusion or controversy.

An additional contribution to the Pupil Services Team by the social worker is in the knowledge and use of community resources. Social workers should be knowledgeable of the various human service resources in the community and thereby provide a means for referral for additional supportive services for the pupil and his/her family. Through effective use of community resourves, a comprehensive program may be developed in situations that would otherwise be neglected. The schools cannot possibly provide for all of the needs of pupils, and it is not their responsibility to do this, but referral to the appropriate service provider is a vital service and responsibility.

The National Association of Social Workers has published standards for the practice of social work in schools and provides the professional leadership for social workers in this area of practice.[4] For additional information regarding this profession, refer to the listing of professional organizations for the address of the National Associaton of Social Workers.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Public Law 94-142 defines Psychological Services as including:

"(i) Administering psychological and educational tests and other assessment procedures;

(ii) Interpreting assessment results;

(iii) Obtaining, integrating, and interpreting information about child behavior and conditions relating to learning;

(iv) Consulting with other staff members in planning school programs to meet the special needs of children as indicated by psychological tests, interviews, and behavioral evaluations; and

(v) Planning and managing a program of psychological services, including psychological counseling for children and parents."[5]

The psychologist is obviously a vital member of the Pupil Services Team and brings an expertise in the psychodiagnostic area. The psychologist, through evaluative procedures, represents to the committee a perspective of the pupil's strengths, weaknesses, and personality structure and aptitudes. This data, when viewed in the context of information from the other team members, is vital to the planning process.

In addition to the diagnostic skills of the psychologist, there are other skills shared with Pupil Service team members. Consultation with teachers and other staff members regarding behavior management is a major role of the psychologist as is the provision of counselling services for pupils, parents, and others in various areas of personal or adjustment problems.

There is a tendency to view the psychologist only as a diagnostician and to classify a pupil solely on the basis of the findings of the psychological evaluation. All facets of the pupil's situation must be considered in any evaluative process, and the use of any single diagnostic tool in isolation is not in the pupil's best interest and is prohibited. The need to evaluate a pupil from every perspective, while time-consuming and expensive, is the most realistic way to arrive at the most effective educational plan for the pupil.

The National Association of School Psychologists and the American Psychological Association, both professional organizations to which school psychologists belong, have published information and standards for the practice of psychology in schools. The mailing address for these organizations is listed in Appendix II.

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

School Health Services vary extensively throughout the educational system both nationally and within the same state. Many school districts have no professional staff providing health services, while other districts have full-time nurses in each school and pediatricians serving as medical directors. Obviously, the quality and availability of services in this area ranges from nonexistent to exemplary. The health services provider is a vital member of the Pupil Services Team, and the National Association of School Nurses is the professional organization promoting professional school nurses within the educational systems. (New York Statler, Suite 104, 7th Avenue and 33rd Street, New York, New York 10001)

The most frequent service provider in this area is the Registered Nurse who is employed by the school system and commonly known as the "school nurse." There are numerous other persons given this responsibility who have little or no training in medicine. Volunteers are frequently used to man the school clinics, and the school secretary frequently doubles as a nurse. The Pupil Services Team demands the services of a competent professional in this area to represent the medical and physical facets of the total service program.

In addition to serving as a crucial member of the Pupil Services Team in evaluating, planning, and program development for pupils, the nurse provides a wide range of health services including various screening tests such as vision and hearing evaluations, provides first-aid when necessary, aids students on medication in the proper taking of medicines, and provides health information and education to students. The school nurse is becoming an increasingly valuable member of the educational and pupil service program with a new field of specialization developing within the profession, as

nurses are now being trained as School Nurse Practitioners in some medical schools.

SPEECH/LANGUAGE SERVICES

Public Law 94-142 defines "Speech pathology" as including:

"(i) Identification of children with speech or language disorders;

(ii) Diagnosis and appraisal of specific speech or language disorders;

(iii) Referral for medical or other professional attention necessary for the habilitation of speech or language disorders;

(iv) Provisions of speech and language services for the habilitation or prevention of communicative disorders; and

(v) Counseling and guidance of parents, children, and teachers regarding speech and language disorders." [6]

According to figures released by the American Speech and Hearing Association (10801 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md. 20852) one of every 20 persons in America suffer from a speech or language disorder. As is true with most handicapping conditions, early identification enhances the chances of cure or prevention, and the Speech Patholdgist is obviously a vital member of the Pupil Services Team when it comes to screening and evaluating pupils in the area of communication skills.

Many school districts have few or no speech pathologists on their staff while others have extensive services and require that all pupils be screened for speech and language problems. In light of the requirements of PL 94-142 that communication skills be evaluated, this service is increasingly in demand.

In addition to the screening and evaluative services of the speech pathologist, their services are being recognized in the area of consultation with colleagues in developing programs to help pupils deal with their

communication problems. Many human services specialists, including teachers, are not knowledgeable in the area of speech problems and the various ways of working with them and are increasingly demanding assistance from speech pathologists in this area. As a member of the Pupil Services Team the speech pathologist brings another vital skill and perspective to the program and is able to provide technical assistance in an area that is frequently omitted in the planning for pupils.

In addition to those professionals mentioned, there are other Pupil Service team members who are sometimes not included in team meetings or activities. The teacher of the pupil is a vital member of the team and should participate in all the team activities. This may be taken for granted in some situations and not considered in others where the principal or guidance counselor may represent the educational member of the team. Persons knowing the pupil best are better able to evaluate and plan for that student.

Probably the most crucial member of the Pupil Service Team is the pupil. Most often the pupil does not participate in the team meetings or activities, and this may be appropriate. However, in many secondary schools with older students there have been some very exciting results because of including the pupil in the team's planning efforts and thereby giving the pupil a voice in his or her program planning.

Finally, the parents of the pupil must be afforded an opportunity to work with the Pupil Service Team. Parent's rights and responsibilities are frequently overlooked by professionals in human services, and yet these are the key persons in any evaluation or planning that may be undertaken. Parents should be included as team members working with others in the best

interest of their child. Unfortunately, parents are most often "done to" by the team rather than participating as vital members of the team process. When parents feel that they are a part of the process rather than an outsider being told what to do, the results usually are much more positive. Certainly school-community relations are strengthened when parents are involved throughout their child's educational experience.

The professions mentioned here represent those disciplines represented in the evaluative process as required in Public Law 94-142 for pupils suspected of being handicapped. There are other human service professionals employed in many school districts, and a mailing list of the professional organizations is included in Appendix II for informational purposes. Additional information regarding the services provided, training required, and other factors is readily available from these organizations.

The various disciplines are not discussed at length here, as the purpose of this writing is to focus on the team process and the service delivery system. The differences between the professions and the services viewed as being unique to a specific discipline could easily provide material for lengthy discussion and debate, and this will undoubtedly take place in the teams that are established. This is a part of the testing and learning process that teams go through before maturing to the level of trust necessary to be most effective.

Mention should also be made here of the National Alliance of Pupil Service Organizations (NAPSO) that is still in the formative stages but involves most of the human service organizations on the national level. This group meets regularly in Washington, D.C., and is in close contact with the Department of Education. The organizations have representation through their paid staff who keep in touch with each other through regular meetings, and there are annual meetings where volunteer members in leadership positions of the organizations come together. The annual meeting is

held in conjunction with a member organization's annual conference. The National Association of School Psychologists held their annual convention in Washington in April, 1980, and NAPSO met at that time. Most of the organizations listed in Appendix II participate in NAPSO, and the results are being seen in the increasing ability to have representation in the development of federal legislation and policy related to education.

In summary, the Pupil Service Team approach offers the most effective and efficient use of professional staff members in an educational setting. It serves to bring into play the diverse areas of skill and the expertise of a variety of professionals, each with a major contribution to the total program. It provides a means to develop a comprehensive program for any pupil through the use of resources within the school system as well as the total community. It is only through community-wide efforts that the needs of children will be addressed. The time of each profession, agency, or system working in a vacuum and thereby fragmenting children and services is rapidly passing, and the need for a realistic pooling of resources is here. If the human service providers are not able to develop this type of collaboration and teamwork, other forces will create some system of service that may be economically attractive but not meet the basic needs of children.

The ideas presented here are not new. They represent many practices and concepts that have been around for some time. Additionally, it is expected that they will need to be adapted to any particular system where they are implemented due to a variety of factors ranging from available staff to philosophical differences. It is hoped, however, that those persons in Pupil Services will develop a team concept and avoid the danger that exists when there is no sharing of skills and knowledge by those entrusted with the welfare of our children.

FOOTNOTES

1. PL 94-142. Federal Register, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Tuesday, August 23, 1977, § 121a.532 (e), Volume 42, No. 163

2. Ibid., § 121a.14

3. Ibid., § 121a.13 paragraph (11)

4. National Association of Social Workers: NASW Standards for Social Work Services in Schools, April, 1978

5. PL 94-142, op. cit., §121a.13 paragraph (8)

6. Ibid., § 121a.13

APPENDIX I.

_____ Public Schools 1980-81

Pupil Services Team Schedule and Assignments

School	Psychologist	Social Worker	Nurse	Speech Path.	Counselor	Day & Time
Smith Elem.	B. Thorne	A. Mitchell	T. Smith	J. Dol	Y. M. Jones	1st Mon. 9:30 a.m.
Jones High School	B. Thorne	A. Mitchell	A. Jones	M. Smith	A. Billings*	2nd Tues. 9:30 a.m.
Garfield Elem.	J. Moore	B. Jordan		A. Jackson	S. Williams*	2nd Wed. 1 p.m
Washington Jr. High	G. Garrison	A. White		B. Atlee	R. Moore*	3rd Wed. 9 a.m

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Appendix I. a

PUPIL SERVICE TEAM SCHEDULE

P.—

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	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1st WEEK	Smith Elem. 9:30 a.m.				
2nd WEEK		Jones High 9:30 a.m.	Garfield Elem. 1 p.m.		
3rd WEEK			Washington Jr.H. 9 a.m.		
4th WEEK					
5th WEEK					

APPENDIX II

Pupil Service Organizations

Listed here are the member organizations in the National Alliance of Pupil Service Organizations. The organizations and persons listed here are able to provide additional information regarding their particular profession and standards. The names of various officers change from time to time, and the reader is encouraged to contact the national office of each organization listed when inquiring about their association.

Governmental Affairs
American Art Therapy Association
5232 Clifton Street
Alexandria, VA 22312

American Coalition of Citizens
with Disabilities
1200-15th Street NW Suite 201
Washington, D. C. 20005

American Occupational Therapy
Association, Inc.,
Government & Legal Affairs Div.
1383 Piccard Drive, Suite 300
Rockville, MD 20850

American Personnel & Guidance Assoc.
2 Skyline Place
5203 Leesburg Pike, Suite 400
Falls Church, VA 22041

American Physical Therapy Assoc.
1156-15th Street, NW
Washington, D. C. 20005

Administrative Officers, Social
and Ethical Responsibility
American Psychological Association
1200-17th. Street, NW
Washington, D. C. 20036

American Society of Allied
Health Professions
One Dupont Circle, Suite 300
Washington, D. C. 20036

Congressional Relations Div.
American Speech-Language-Hearing Assoc.
10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Assoc. for the Advancement of Psychology
1200 Seventeenth Street, NW
Washington, D. C. 20036

Deputy Director for Legislation
Association for the Advancement of
Psychology
1200-17th Street
Washington, D. C. 20036

Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

International Association of
Pupil Personnel Workers
14501 Avery Road
Rockville, MD 20853

National Associataion of School Nurses
7706 John Hancock Lane
Dayton, OH 45459

National Association of School
Psychologists
1825 Connecticut Street, NW
Suite 418
Washington, D. C. 20009

Council on Social Work Services Schools
National Association of Social Workers
7981 Eastern Avenue
Silver Springs, MD 20901

National Association of State
Consultants for School Psych. Services
P. O. Box 20087
Tallahassee, FL 32304

National Association of School
Psychologists
5547 Springdale Drive
Pittsburg, PA 15234

National Committee for Citizens
in Education
Suite 410, Wilde Lake Village Green
Columbia, MD 21044

Deputy Director
State & Local Education Programs
Office of Elementary & Secondary Education
U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 2009
Washington, D. C. 20202

Webster Building
U. S. Office of Education
Room 1
10th & H Streets, NW
Washington, D. C. 20001

Part II

Record Keeping

PUPIL SERVICES - The Team Approach

Part II

Record Keeping

Toy F. Watson,

Director, Pupil Services
Newport News Public Schools
Newport News, Virginia

RECORD KEEPING AND THE PUPIL SERVICE TEAM

The Pupil Service Team is a vital concept that serves to provide an expedient and qualitative service delivery system for pupils. At the heart of this process is the record keeping system that must be established and have clearly defined procedures to be followed.

The Pupil Service records are, in most situations, defined as confidential and are subject to the various laws and regulations related to the handling of confidential materials regarding pupils. Public Law 14-142 implies that a central record system is desirable in the statement that one person or official will assume responsibility for maintaining the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information regarding any student. This law, along with various federal and state statutes dictate the requirements for protecting confidential information and the rights of parents, pupils, and others to have access to these records.

Generally, the parents of any pupil have a right to review and have copies of any and all materials related to their child. This material is not available to other persons without their written consent, and records must be kept of the release of confidential reports. There is much confusion and disagreement with these requirements, with many professionals feeling that parents are not appropriately trained to have this type of access. It is the feeling of this writer, both as a parent and a professional, that this is a very sound law and that the parent has the ultimate responsibility for the child and must be involved in any decision-making process. This includes having access to any information on which any decision is based.

The protection of confidential materials is adequately reviewed in the various state and federal laws and the reader is encouraged to review these laws as they apply in the setting appropriate to their situation.

In organizing a Pupil Services program in a school system or district, record-keeping procedures must be given high priority in the planning process. In the team effort, there is a need for a pooling of information, and a central file system is the most appropriate way of accomplishing this. All materials, reports, communications, etc., are kept in a central file and/are available to all team members as they work with the pupil. This means that there should be one confidential file containing these materials and this file should be kept in a central location with clear procedures for access and monitering. All requests for copies of materials, information, and access of any nature should be channeled through this central file office and the appropriate records kept through systematic procedures that will meet the legal mandate for documenting these matters.

Immediately, with this statement, there are numerous questions and problems that are presented: Should the confidential file be in the school building where the pupil is attending? Should the teacher have it? Should there be two files? How to moniter this material when many children are nomadic in their life style and frequently change schools? A suggested central file system will be presented here with the understanding that any system must be flexible and should be adapted to meet the needs of the specific situation.

Objectives of a Central File System for Pupil Services

1. To maintain the original or master copy of all documents, reports, and confidential materials that are generated with the Pupil Services System. By centralizing this, record keeping is simplified, duplication is minimized, and monitering is more efficient.
2. To provide a repository for all confidential information possessed by the school division for all students. All confidential materials should be channeled through this central file.

3. To moniter and record dissemination of confidential reports to individuals within the school division, allied professionals or agencies outside the school division (with prior consent from parent or legal guardian), parents, and governmental agencies in accordance with the legal requirements. By having this process centralized, the various school building personnel are relieved of this responsibility. The chance for oversight or mishandling of materials is lessened.
4. Maintain appropriate records in terms of evaluative processes and time line requirements, documentation of various pupil services, and to facilitate the compiling of the various evaluative components required for consideration of pupils suspected of being handicapped.

Mechanics of Operation

I. The Central File Card

The Central File Card is the heart of the record-keeping system. It should be developed in such a way as to contain the basic information necessary to give the current status of the pupil at any time. The variety of central file card possibilities are limitless and range from a simple card with the pupil's name and present placement to a tracking card indicating the date and purpose for referral, date and actions taken, and listing the Pupil Service staff members working with the pupil. Illustrated in Figure 1 is a card used by one school district. This card is a part of a self-copying referral form that makes five copies, each a different color. Each color designates a Pupil Service department (white - psychometrist; yellow - psychologist; green - medical; yellow - social worker, etc.) and are distributed appropriately whenever a referral is received. This provides a simultaneous referral to the appropriate service departments and also informs each service provider of what other services are being requested.

This card, the back copy, remains in the central file and becomes the

central file card. The back of this card, Figure 2, provides for recording the receipt of various reports from outside agencies as well as Pupil Service staff members, special notes are made indicating specific actions taken, and the pupil's placement in school or special education. With this information fed into the central files, the Pupil Service staff may readily check on the status of a pupil and any community agency, with appropriate consent, also has access to this information.

This Central File Card is kept in a file within the Central Record office and is immediately available to provide current status of any referral being handled by the Pupil Service staff. In addition to providing a valuable service to staff, parents, and others, this system enhances the team concept by visibly demonstrating the need of the various services to work together and graphically points out where weaknesses occur. With this type of tracking system, a service area that is consistently late in filing reports or following up on referrals becomes conspicuous to the other staff members using the system. Coordinators can easily demonstrate the workload at any time, and the nature and type of services provided are documented. Statistical date is readily available in terms of the numbers and type of referrals received. Color coded dots have been used with this central card to indicate types of referrals, dates for re-evaluations of pupils in special programs, and numerous other reasons. A red dot in the upper left corner of the cards for all pupils placed in special education during a specific year would automatically indicate that three years later all of the red dots would be due for the three-year re-evaluation. This system could easily be transferred to a computerized record-keeping process that is being adopted in some larger school districts.

II. The Central File Folder

The Central File Folder contains the official confidential materials

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FIGURE 1.

_____ PUBLIC SCHOOLS

STUDENT REFERRAL TO PUPIL SERVICES

SCHOOL			GRADE	STUDENT I.D. #
PUPIL	LAST	FIRST MIDDLE	SEX	BIRTHDATE
NAME OF PARENTS GUARDIAN			OCCUPATION	
ADDRESS				PHONE HOME WORK

REQUIRED ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS/SERVICES

☐	Psychological Evaluation	☐ Services	☐	Speech Evaluation	☐ Services	☐	Social Appraisal	☐ Services
☐	Academic Evaluation		☐	Audiological	☐ Services	☐	Social Behavior Checklist	
☐	Medical	☐ Services	☐	Vision & Hearing		☐	Attendance	☐ Services

DATES

REFERRAL RECEIVED
REPORT DUE
DATE COMPLETED

SIGNATURE TITLE

FIGURE 2.
AGENCY REPORTS

☐	PSYCH	☐	SPCH	☐	SA
☐	ACAD	☐	AUD	☐	SBC
☐	MED	☐	V&H	☐	PSYTRC
☐	MHC	☐	PCDC	☐	JC
☐	SSB	☐		☐	
☐		☐		☐	

CASE NOTES:

PLACEMENT:

DATE	CLASS	SCHOOL	DATE	CLASS	SCHOOL
DATE	CLASS	SCHOOL	DATE	CLASS	SCHOOL
DATE	CLASS	SCHOOL	DATE	CLASS	SCHOOL

Last First Middle DOB Gr Id No

for pupils within the system. Psychological reports, case studies, medical evaluations, psychiatric reports, and other confidential reports are kept in this file. There also must be a record of access for the file, and this is most efficiently kept in the form of a check-out card where persons using the file check it out and thereby make a record of access as required. This card is signed by the person using the file and left in the record room to be replaced in the folder upon its return.

The organization of the central file folder varies from a simple folder with everything put in no particular order to a very sophisticated folder with compartmentalized materials, dividers, and all materials arranged in order either by department or chronologically. Folders are expensive, and many larger systems find that there soon presents a space problem with the larger folders.

The central file folder must be available to those persons in need of the information contained in it. A check-out system assures that the whereabouts of the folder is known at all times, and the person checking out the folder is held responsible for it during the period it is checked out to them. Many central file systems do not allow the central folder to leave the building or area where the central file is located, and it cannot be checked out to a person for more than a twenty-four hour period at any one time. This avoids staff members having several folders stacked away in an office or desk when others may need them. Obviously, such a check-out system has to be adapted to the needs of the specific situation and must be clearly defined to all persons expected to use the system.

There are several problems with a central file system, and their solutions will depend on the specific situation or system being operated. A major question is whether or not the confidential materials should be in the school where the pupil is assigned. Many persons feel that the teacher, particularly in

a special education program, should have this material. There is little question that the teacher should have access to the material in working with the pupil, but there is a question whether or not this material should be kept in the classroom or school building. Whatever plan is implemented, it is vital that procedures for monitering access and to assure that confidentiality is not breached must be developed.

The central file system may be developed in such a way as to provide access to building personnel to the files for pupils. One way of providing the teacher with access is to implement a check-out system where a folder may be checked out to the teacher or the teacher may come to the central location to review the folder. This does not usually work effectively due to the distances, inconvenience, and general lack of means to transport folders quickly when needed. Also, if the file is checked out and leaves the central file area, it defeats the purpose of the central file.

A second, and more frequent solution, is to maintain a confidential folder in the school where the pupil attends with copies of appropriate materials available in that folder for use by the personnel in daily contact with the pupil. This procedure has some shortcomings and immediately creates the problem of having duplicate materials and the inherent problems of monitering their circulation and accessibility. If confidential files are maintained in the school with the pupils, extreme care must be taken to follow the monitering and control procedures required. Additionally, the school staff should not provide copies of these materials to outside agencies or anyone but should refer all such requests to the central files where the district's official files are kept.

Another problem that arises with the duplicate folder kept with the pupil is the difference of content that may occur. The central file may receive reports or information that is not shared or sent to the second folder, and the school may also receive materials and neglect to send it to the central file for filing. The resulting fragmentation of information may go unnoticed

until someone accidentally realizes that there is material available in one source and not the other. Every person using a confidential file should take the responsibility to question the materials it contains to determine their recency, appropriateness, and to determine that appropriate procedures are followed in allowing access. If clear procedures are established and all staff are made aware of these procedures and held accountable for following them, most problems in handling confidential materials can be avoided. Where procedures are lax, unclear, or unheeded, problems arise and parents or students may hold the school personnel liable for a breach of confidentiality.

If a central file system is to be developed and efficiently managed, it must be staffed with persons knowledgeable and competent in the management of records. A person designated as records manager should have the responsibility for operating the system and must work closely with those departments and staff members using the file system. The records manager, in addition to records managing skills, must also have communications skills that enable the person to communicate with all users of the system equally even though each user is convinced that their need or material is the primary reason for the central file and takes precedent over all other matters. The team concept must also apply in the central files and the file be seen as "our" file rather than the sole property of any person or department.

III. Forms and Documentation

In establishing a central file system or a Pupil Service Team structure, procedures and practices must be clearly defined and made known to all persons involved. With the increasing demand for these procedures and for documentation of activities, there has come a phenomenal increase in paper work and forms. Many staff members and parents have become disenchanted with the avalanche of paper work and see it as a means to defeat a program or service. It is very likely that many pupils do not receive adequate services because someone did not want to fill out some form or comply with a requirement that records be

kept. Conversely, many pupils have received good services and support with no record or documentation being made and later the necessary information has not been available when needed. Obviously, the attitude that one has towards these requirements will directly affect the efficiency with which the system operates.

Procedures should be developed and stated in clear and concise ways to expedite the accomplishment of the desired goal. Documentation of activities should also be clear, concise, and as simple aspossible. Most forms are developed as a means of record keeping and documentation. There are persons and businesses who are experts in developing forms and documents for bureaucracies to use in record keeping. It may be that such a professional may be consulted in the development of Pupil Service forms, and may prove to be a sound investment, particularly if the possiblity of computerizing a system exists. Pupil Service staff members are not known for their expertise in developing record systems.

In reviewing the various forms that must be used, it would be impossible to cover all possibilities that will arise. Forms are developed, modified, and discarded for any number of reasons and are the source of much frustration and confusion. There are a few basic guidelines that should be followed in the development of any form:

1. The reason for a form's existence should be clear. If the reason should become obsolete or no longer exist, the form should be terminated.
2. The form should be kept as simple and consistent as possible. Unnecessary information or items should not be put on the form. Only information essential to the purpose of the form should be included.
3. The form should be organized in logical order. Identifying information should be clearly indicated and additional information should be arranged in an order that is logical and "flows" naturally in sequence.

4. Written information should be kept to a minimum. Check-off spaces should be provided with a minimum of written information being required. When a form requires written information, it is frequently illegible, inadequate, inconsistent, and ignored. If the person completing the form can simply check or circle appropriate information, the form tends to be more reliable.
5. Where several forms are used within a system or program, they should be standardized whenever possible to avoid confusion. An example of this is the identifying information that is at the top or head of many forms. If this part of every form is standardized and consistent, it will save time and expense because each item will be in the same place on each piece of material.
6. Forms should be designed in such a way as to be easily filed and recovered. One system is to color code certain forms. An example is to have the parental consent form on a different color paper and placed in the central file. A staff member could, at a glance, determine whether or not that form is in the file as required. Certainly the purpose of the form should be indicated at the very top of the form either by title or introductory statement.
7. Sample forms and instructions must be made available to all persons having reason to use it. Included in these instructions should be a review of the purpose of the form and the way it is used in the total system. If persons understand the reasons for a procedure or form, it is more likely to be utilized appropriately.
8. If a form is used in an area where there is a legal requirement or where a legal procedure may be involved, it would be prudent to have the form reviewed by the appropriate legal advisor for compliance with any statute that may be relevant. The wording of certain consent and release forms

is crucial when a matter is contested, and that form becomes evidence in a disagreement or hearing.

With these general guidelines for the development and use of forms in the Pupil Service delivery system, there are several forms that seem to be consistently necessary, and a brief review of them is in order.

Consent for Evaluation. (Sample form included in Appendix I.) Public Law 94-142 mandates that parental consent be obtained prior to any program change, evaluation, or other activity involving a pupil suspected of being handicapped. There are numerous forms for this purpose that have been developed, and it is probable that each school district has devised and discarded several variations of the one that is presently being used. The following information would be appropriate for such a consent form:

1. Identifying information regarding the pupil.
   This section to include the name, address, age, school grade and assignment.
2. The specific evaluations to be completed.
   Such a form should inform the parent or guardian of the specific evaluations being done and the person or professional discipline that will be completing the evaluation. Please note Appendix I.
3. A statement of specific consent for this service or activity with a place for the date and signature of the parent or guardian.
4. A statement indicating that consent is denied with space for signing.
   Should the parent specifically disapprove of this activity, documentation is necessary, and this form will provide the necessary document to support the reason the service has not been provided.

Consent Forms. In general, consent forms would relate to the placement of a pupil in a special situation, participation in a specific activity, or the release of confidential information. The following guidelines should be

followed in the development of consent forms:

1. The specific activity to which consent is being given must be clearly and concisely described. If consent is being given for the release of information, the specific information must be described and the agency or person to whom the information is being released must be indicated. Additionally, the purpose for which the information is to be used should be stated on the form.
2. The form must be dated.
3. The authority of the signer of the form must be indicated. Does this person have the authority to give this consent? This is most frequently accomplished by having the person indicate his relationship to the pupil such as PARENT/GUARDIAN. Often the signer may be a welfare worker, probation officer or other person having authority in this area. This information is necessary for the releasing agency.
4. A copy of the consent form should be provided to the signer for their records. The original copy is filed in the central confidential folder.
5. While not required, it is a good practice to have consent forms witnessed by the person, usually a staff member, who is responsible for obtaining the signer's signature. Also it is practiced in some agencies to have a time of expiration stated on the form rather than leave it open to the discretion of the staff or agency.

IV. Committee Reports. (See Appendix II for sample Committee report.)

Many decisions are made by committees, and Public Law 94-142 mandates that records be kept of these committee meetings and findings. A committee report form has been devised in many school districts, and some general guidelines are appropriate for this type of record keeping. The types of committee that need to keep records of their actions include the Eligibility Committee, Child Study Committee, I.E.P. Committee, and other committees that meet and make

decisions regarding pupils. A listing of information that should be on such a committee will serve as a guide to the development of a form for this purpose.

1. Identifying information. This part of the form should be consistent with the identifying information section on other records such as the central file card, consent forms, etc.

2. The type of committee must be identified. This identification will indicate the purpose of the committee meeting. Obviously, an Eligibility Committee is to decide the eligibility for services, and other committees are appropriately titled.

3. The materials available for the committee's review. A listing of evaluative reports with space to check off the ones used is an efficient means of recording this. Example: Psychological report_____, Social History_____, Medical Report_____, and others as may be appropriate.

4. The specific findings of the committee. These findings should be directly related to the purpose of the committee. If it is an eligibility committee, the findings should be stated in terms of whether or not the pupil is eligible or not eligible for a special program or service. This finding should be based on specific evaluative data and stated so that the reasons are clear.

5. Recommendations should be specific in terms of activities or services to be provided. Additionally, the provider of services should be indicated along with the nature and purpose of these services. General recommendations that do not specify the nature of the service, the purpose, or the provider of a service frequently do not get implemented. Example: The recommendation for "counselling" is frequently made. The meaning of this recommendation without clarification is so vague that no one is able to implement it. The more

appropriate recommendation would be "counselling to aid pupil in making responsible decisions and following through on plans and responsibilities." Possible sources of counselling: Guidance, Psychologist, Social Worker, or other resource that should be specified in the committee report.

Also in the area of recommendations, consideration should be given to establishing time frames for delivery of services and to review progress. Frequently, without some form of accountability, recommendations are ignored, nonproductive, or misinterpreted. There should be some method to review the implementation of recommendations in order to improve services and to strengthen resources for future cases with similar needs.

6. Sign off for committee members. A committee report should provide for the members to sign the report and, if they dissent with the committee findings, to state their individual opinions or dissention. This is a professionally sound practice as well as a means of meeting the due process requirements of the law. It is mandatory that persons making decisions regarding pupils be held accountable for the actions taken. Committees are an effective means of arriving at sound decisions but the composition of the committee must be documented, and having the members sign the report is the most efficient means of accomplishing this. Additionally, it provides a quick reference for consulation and future efforts with the individual pupil when this committee report with the members' names affixed is filed in the central confidential file and persons working with the pupil have access to it readily.

Committee reports need not be lengthy documents but must contain the basic findings and recommendations in enough detail that the parents, pupil, and those working with them are able to understand and implement them in a realistic way. Such a report, when accompanied by the supportive data on which the decisions are based, become the core of the planning process for the development of special programs and activities. This packet serves as the basis for action and provides the required documentation for actions taken or

not taken.

Committee reports, as with all reports, must be clear and concise to the point that the reader will understand the meaning of the report without having to backtrace and re-do the work that was done. It is always possible that no one on the committee or who provided the supportive data, will be available to the person or agency charged with implementing the recommendations. The proverbial truck could hit anyone at any time!

Other records that are kept in the Pupil Services files include the various evaluative reports and test data. These materials are developed by the professional staff, and each has a set of standards established by their respective profession. The codes of ethics established by the various professions should be familiar to each practitioner within that discipline and should be upheld by that person. Parents and others having access to these records frequently have only the materials therein to use in forming opinions of the quality of service, competency of service providers, and effectiveness of the program. It is essential that these records be kept in a well-organized fashion that will reflect a high level of professionalism and respect for the individual pupil. Sloppy record keeping frequently reflects sloppy services, and the respect shown for the individual pupil is often reflected in the way the records for that pupil are kept.

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PERMISSION TO EVALUATE

School_____ Grade_____ ID#_____

Student_____ Birthdate_____

Parents/Guardian_____

Address_____ Phone_____

Your child will be observed and tested to describe his/her current functioning in the following areas:

AREA	INFORMATION	EVALUATOR (S)
Physical Health	Vision, hearing, physical examination, blood and urine studies	School Nurse or Audiologist Private Physician or School Nurse Practitioner
Academic Achievement	Reading, mathematics and other subjects	Classroom Teacher and/or Psychometrist
Psychological	Mental ability, emotional and perceptual development	Psychologist
Social Appraisal	Social/personal, behavior and developmental history through parent interview on a home visit	Visiting Teacher/ School Social Worker
Communication Skills	Understanding and using spoken language	Speech/language Pathologist

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I GIVE PERMISSION FOR the _____Public Schools to proceed with the evaluation to determine whether or not my child

_____

(Name of Child) (Birthdate)

is eligible for special education and related services to meet his/her needs. I understand that I have the right to review my child's school records and to be informed of the results of this evaluation. I understand that no change will be made in my child's program as a result of these evaluations without my knowledge. I understand that I have the right to refuse to give permission for this evaluation.

Date _____ Signature of Parent_____

I DO NOT GIVE PERMISSION FOR the Public Schools to proceed with the evaluation to determine whether or not my child

_____

(Name of Child) (Birthdate)

is eligible for special education and related services to meet his/her needs. I understand that I have the right to review my child's school records. I understand that the_____ _____Public Schools may use established procedures to obtain authorization to proceed with the evaluation. I understand that if the_____Public Schools appeals my decision, I will be notified of my due process rights in this procedure.

Date _____ Signature of Parent_____

_____ _____

(Date Received) (Signature of School Official)

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Appendix I

PUPIL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

REPORT OF THE ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE

Incomplete reports will be returned to the school

School _____ Grade _____ Student I.D. Number _____

Pupil _____ Sex _____ Birth Date _____
Last First Middle

Name of Parents/Guardian _____

Address _____ Telephone: Home _____ Work _____

Referred by _____ Date referred _____

Nature of the case: ___ New ___ Review ___ Triennial Re-evaluation ___ Other _____

Supporting Data:

( ) Psychological
( ) Medical
( ) Audiometric/Audiological
( ) Social Case History
( ) Educational Evaluation
( ) Opthalmological
( ) Psychiatric
( ) Social Behavior Checklist
( ) Diagnostic Speech/Language Evaluation
( ) Other _____

Summary of Committee's Findings:

Recommendations:

___ Remain in the regular program with essential modifications
___ Enroll in Special Education: Category _____ Environment: _____
___ Transfer from the Special Education program into a regular class program
___ Review case on _____ (date.)
___ Other _____

Related Services Needed (documented by supporting data):

___ Audiological
___ Parent Counseling
___ Physical Therapy
___ Social Work
___ Occupational Therapy
___ Recreation
___ School Health Services
___ Speech/Language Therapy
___ Child Counseling
___ Physical Education
___ Vocational Education
___ Other _____

ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

agree	disagree	SIGNATURES	POSITION
			Principal
			___ Teacher ___ Guidance Counselor
			School Psychologist
			Special Educator
			School Nurse
			Social worker
			Reading Consultant
			Speech Pathologist
			Other

EC Meeting Date _____